keeping in Touch
UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES
September 1995

Atlanta Perspective: MCC on the Move

Steve Warren

Purchasing property for an international headquarters in West Hollywood, decentralizing bureaucracy to help double the size of member churches in ten years,

COVER STORY

establishing a Ministry of Justice, planning to go online and breezing through the least contentious business session in its 27-year history, the UFMCC held General Conference XVII in Atlanta July 23-30 with an eye to preparing for the 21st century.

Although the official conference theme was "All Things Are Possible," a frequently heard leitmotif was "For the Next Generation." With increased participation by children and young adults and new leadership emerging from the ranks, the denomination that began with the aim of becoming obsolete as soon as it had forced mainstream churches to accept lesbians and gays, dug in for the long haul. UFMCC Founder and Moderator Rev. Elder Troy Perry, opened the week by predicting it would be "our most historical session ever" and closed by declaring it "the turning point toward the next generation." Privately he expressed his pleasure at what he called "an incredible vote of confidence in our leadership." In addition to passing most proposed structural changes with only minor revisions, the conference re-elected all three elders whose terms were expiring: The Rev. Elders Nancy Wilson, Don Eastman and Wilhelmina Hein—a lesbian and a gay man from the U.S. and a transsexual from New Zealand. They remain on the board with Perry, Elder Larry Rodriguez (Hispanic-American) and the Rev. Elders Darlene Garner (African-American) and Hong Tan (Chinese-English).

This top leadership reflects the diversity of the fellowship, but not proportionately. There are MCCs (or the equivalent in local tongues, such as ICM in Spanish- speaking countries) in 14 countries, and a South African group applied for membership during the conference. UFMCC continues to make progress on inclusivity and accessibility issues, including translations for non-English speakers, but it's a tremendous undertaking. Hein, who plans to have gender reassignment surgery later this year, wondered in a sermon whether she would be accorded as much respect if she weren't an elder, and declared, "If there's no room for me in MCC there 's no room for anyone."

The conference heard a wide range of angry and/or prophetic voices, the most futuristic belonging to journalist Chandler Burr, whose book *In Search of the Gay Gene*, will be published by Walt Disney-owned Hyperion next March. Also next March, Burr said, a Santa Clara, California company will market a computer chip that will allow doctors to analyze a patient's DNA in their offices, inexpensively. This will let them control HIV by tracking the mutation of the virus so appropriate drugs can be administered. While it will be possible to detect—and perhaps eliminate— genetically imprinted diseases by altering a person's DNA, it will also permit early detection of the so-called "gay gene," allowing homophobes to abort or change an unborn queer child.

Burr made it all sound imminent, but later admitted that some of the procedures may be several years in the future. He was dubious about a "lesbian gene," he said, because women tend to be more fluid in their sexuality over their lifetimes.

A theologian with the heart of a stand-up comic, Dr. Elizabeth Stuart, a Welsh lesbian from the University of Glamorgan, called UFMCC to continue "causing theological trouble."

Above–Some attending the Ministry of Diversity and Spiritual Community's luncheon modeled "Eracism" t-shirts. Guest speaker was Phil Wilson, far right.
Right–Thousands gathered daily for worship services at General Conference.

"We can't just inclusify the language and leave the rest intact," she warned, "unless all we want is a place at the table. But the food on the table is rotten."

The Archbishop of Canterbury prevented the publication of Stuart's book, *Daring to Speak Love's Name: A Lesbian and Gay Prayerbook,* in 1992. "What that prayer book represented to the church establishment in England," she told the conference, "was a loss of control over lesbian-gay-bisexual lives. They couldn't begin to understand what a transgendered person was."

Activist, community leader and author Eric Rofes urged local MCCs to facilitate open and honest dialogue about gay male sexuality. Without these internal discussions, he warned, we won't be ready to respond to an inquisitive press. Dishonest responses by our leaders, all of whom paint themselves as happily, monogamously married men or asexual workaholics, have resulted in short-term victories but long-term defeats, Rofes said. Because gay men are still being infected with HIV at an alarming rate, he encouraged the church to "think in terms of long-term prevention strategies" aimed at making gay men "excited about being alive."

Rev. Dr. Mel White, who will continue to serve as UFMCC's Minister of Justice on an unpaid, voluntary basis until after the 1996 U. S. elections, outlined "Soul Force," a strategy for dealing with the religious right based on the teaching of other revolutionary pacifists. He quoted the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "'Jesus gave us the motive and the spirit. Gandhi gave us the method of translating love into real action.' King took the motive and the method and turned them into action in this country," White added.

During the conference Rev. Perry led several hundred marchers through the summer heat to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change for an observance at the tomb of the man whose life continues to inspire our movement.

White's ministry so far has included trying to talk sense about lesbian and gay issues to men he used to ghost-write for, including James Kennedy, who finally met with him to end White's 22-day fast in a Virginia Beach jail. From there White went to the "Reclaiming America For Christ" conference. "I didn't try to change his mind, just his rhetoric." White admits. "We gotta go back to Florida and do better.

Also visiting the conference were Rev. Paul Sherry, president of the United Church of Christ, and his wife Mary, returning the visit Rev. Perry had paid to their denomination. "You are the people who will lead us," Sherry told the MCCers, "into a society of justice and peace for all people." Randall Bailey, Associate Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at the Interdenominational Center in Atlanta enlightened us on church scriputre and the radical right.

Other guests included two openly gay political candidates—Larry Bagneris, who is running for the Louisiana state legislature; and Lynn Cothren, Coretta Scott King's personal assistant, who is seeking a seat on Atlanta's city council.

The destruction of MCC Los Angeles, the "mother church," in last year's earthquake gave impetus to Rev. Perry's dream of purchasing property for a fellowship headquarters. The offices have been in rented space for seventeen years. A year of searching ended in the discovery of adjacent buildings on Santa Monica Boulevard in the heart of West Hollywood—a five-story structure, some of which will be rented out until needed, for UFMCC and a two-story building for MCCLA.

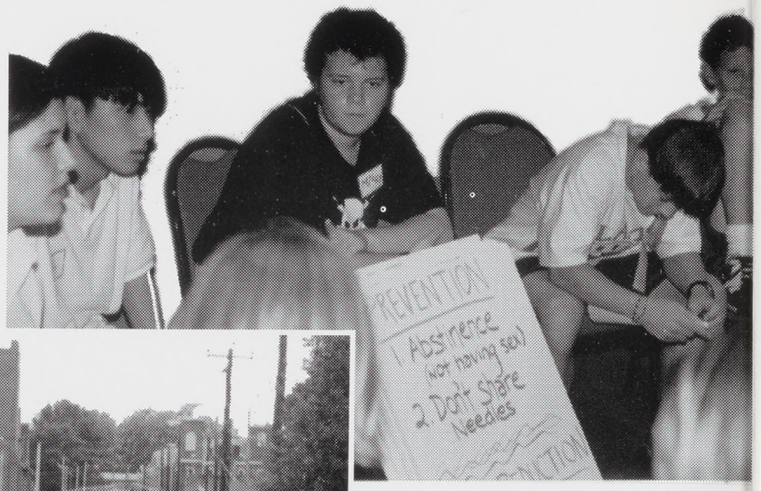
A joint building drive had yielded over $700,000 in cash and pledges before the conference started toward a million-dollar down payment due in October. Perry hopes to pay off the entire $3.8 million purchase price in three years and realize a long held vision of having the gay and lesbian equivalent of a Mormon Visitors Center in a queer mecca. The dedication, he announced, will be next June 23, the day of L.A.'s Pride Parade.

Describing himself as "technophobic," Perry told of his recent conversion to computers. "Honey, I'm surfin' the net now!" he proclaimed. "If I can do it, anybody can!" After his first visit to a gay/lesbian chat room, he said, he received e-mail from an adult bookstore. "The Universal Fellowship is going to do the same thing," he said, "In six months we'll have a page on the net. Every church has got to get a computer!"

Change in general will lead to UFMCC's desired growth, Perry predicted. "If I had a baby and it didn't grow there'd be something wrong with it."

In his closing sermon Perry got down to basics: "We are the church of Jesus Christ, not just another gay/lesbian organization. We must model health, wholeness and holiness to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual communities."

–Steve Warren has been an MCC member since 1972 and has been writing about the Fellowship in the lesbian and gay press since 1974.



Above–Programming for young adults included a safer sex workshop at Conference. **Left–**It was hot, but hundreds marched to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center.

MILESTONE

Samaritan: Celebrating 25

Samaritan Institute for Religious Studies celebrated a quarter century of history at General Conference in Atlanta. During the annual awards luncheon, Samaritan founder Rev. Richard Ploen was honored for his visionary efforts in the early days of MCC. The first annual "Richard Ploen Founder's Award" was presented to Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson. Also recognized were Rev. Elder Don Eastman and St. John the Apostle MCC in Fort Myers, Florida. Speaker at the luncheon was Dr. Robert Goss, author of *Jesus Acted Up*.

SEPTEMBER 1995

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation. *Keeping in Touch* may be freely copied for distribution in UFMCC. Portions may be reprinted in UFMCC church publications, with attribution. For other distribution, please request permission. Subscriptions are free upon request. Send address changes, news and ideas to: *Keeping in Touch*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd, #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100. Deadline for each issue: 15th of previous month.

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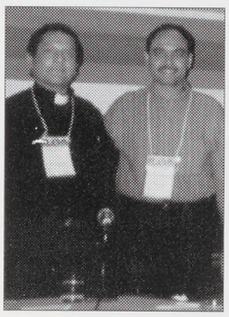
INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

UFMCC at ILGA

Mr. Ravi Verma and Rev. Roberto Gonzalez attended the International Lesbian and Gay Association Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on June 18-25, 1995. There were more than 300 attendees, 60% from South America. UFMCC, Tom Hanks from Other Sheep, and a few other religious organizations from Europe represented religion at the conference. A motion was passed protesting the Argentine government's denial of legal status for the six-year old congregation of the MCC. When the Rev. Roberto Gonzalez of ICM Buenos Aires performed the first mass blessing in Latin America of lesbian and gay couples, thorough media coverage was given, appropriate since Brazil's legislature appears to be at the point of making it the first country outside of Northern Europe (Sweden, Denmark and Norway) to legally approve same-sex unions.



Rev. Roberto Gonzalez and Ravi Verma at ILGA.

HIV/AIDS

Pieters on Leave

After eight years in his position, Rev. Steve Pieters is on administrative leave of absence from his duties as Field Director of AIDS Ministry. He will be out of the office from August 12 through November 12.

During his absence, Rev. Mark Lee in Ft. Collins, Colorado, will be editing *Alert* and the HIV/AIDS column in *Keeping In Touch*, as well as making the monthly pastoral care phone contacts with UFMCC leadership.

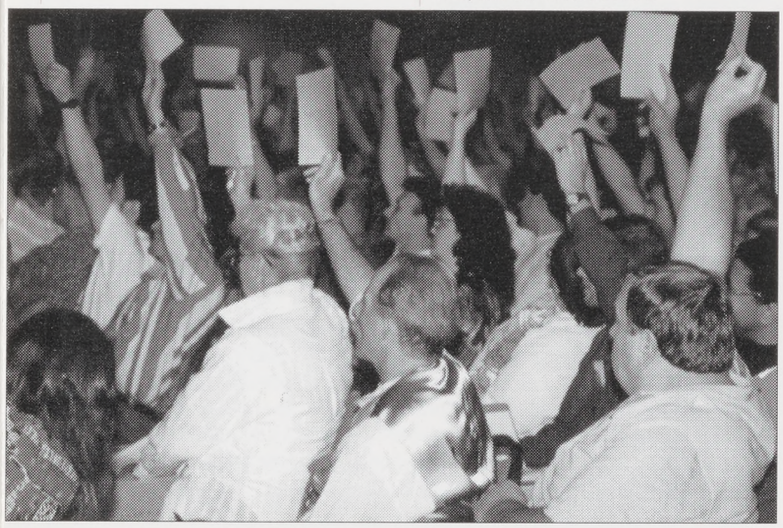
Questions and concerns regarding PEP/MCC should be addressed to Wendy Arnold, Bob Schoonover, or Alison Arngrim (see "PEP/MCC") Inquiries regarding AIDS Ministry resources can be directed to Elsa Martinez at UFMCC headquarters in Los Angeles. While on leave, Pieters intends to retreat to the woods of New England, and work on a new book.

NEWSMAKER

Author Leaves Catholic Church

Dr. Robert Goss, author of *Jesus Acted Up*, has announced his intention to transfer his clergy credentials from the Roman Catholic Church to the Metropolitan Community Church. His announcement was made at UFMCC's General Conference, during the Samaritan Institute awards luncheon on July 25th in Atlanta. Dr. Goss, an unlaicized Catholic priest and former Jesuit, has been impressed by the UFMCC's prophetic ministry as a church of gay men, lesbian bisexuals, transgendered persons, and those who are searching. "I have found a home in a non-sexist and non-homophobic church, ending my exile as a Catholic priest." he said. Goss had joined the Samaritan Institute for Religious Studies, the educational and theological arm of UFMCC that prepares clergy candidates for ministry, as an adjunct faculty member earlier this year.

Doin' the Business–Clergy and lay delegates handled a record volume of business in record time, and with record accord.



LAITY

Commission on Laity Makes His/Herstory

Len Shelton-Rymill

In keeping with the spirit of creating the global church, the Commission on Laity has taken another historic step forward. At its recent meeting at General Conference in Atlanta, the Facilitating Council of the COL voted unanimously to accept an invitation from the European District to have the next meeting in London, England. The invitation was issued through Ms. Beryl Quennell, the European District Rep. to COL and the newly-elected Assistant Chair of the COL. This decision follows on the heels of the COL's funding the visit of the COL Chair, Ms. Jonee Shelton to Australia and New Zealand in March of this year.

The European meeting is slated for late February orMarch, 1996. Ms. Quennell reported the members of the three London congregations have offered to house the COL reps. She also indicated the reps. will be invited to participate in the worship services of each of the congregations. A strong effort will be made to fund the travel expense of a representative from all the congregations in the European District to participate in the first ever meeting of the COL outside the USA.

OOPS . . .

Correction

Rev. Dusty Pruitt's military case, as reported in the last issue, was recently settled by the Army. She received a promotion to Major which was originally rescinded when the lawsuit was filed and honorable retirement in that rank. The original "praise" stated she resigned her commission.

MEMORIAM

Billie L. Edwards

Billie L. Edwards, 48, was a counselor, ex-marine, and worked under the credo that "everyone has beauty ... dignity and a place." She died of brain cancer Wednesday July 5, 1995 at her home in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Former Pastor at MCC Detroit and a counselor in private practice, Edwards was the areas most prominent lesbian advocate for many years and spent a great deal of her last two years helping other women cope with cancer.

Barbara Toller

Barbara I. Toller died on Saturday, August 5, 1995 of Cardiac arrest. Ms. Toller served most recently at the Sunshine Cathedral in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida as a Lay Delegate and Minister of Celebration, and clerk of the Southeast District.

Rev. Ken Caton

Rev. Ken Caton, Assistant Pastor at MCC San Diego, California and All God's Children MCC, Minneapolis, Minnesota, died of lung cancer in July. Rev. Caton also pastored MCC Las Vegas, Nevada and First MCC Wichita, Kansas.

Tom Reveley

Mr. Tom R. Reveley, Phd, 48, of Houston died Wednesday, July 26, 1995 at Twelve Oaks Hospital. Dr. Reveley was a member of Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection in Houston and was a retired officer of the South Central District UFMCC. Very recently, Dr. Reveley was awarded the Kerry Brown Lay Leadership Award, the denomination's most prestigious honor for laity service.

STRATEGIC GROWTH INITIATIVE

Beyond 400: MCC & Megachurches

In the beautiful setting of Southern California's Crystal Cathedral, Rev. Michael Piazza carefully listened to Pastor Robert Schuller recount nearly 40 years of ministry in one of the twentieth century's most remarkable churches. Rev. Piazza, Senior Pastor of Cathedral of Hope MCC in Dallas, had joined more than 3000 local church leaders to participate in Schuller's 25th Annual Institute for Successful Church Leadership. As Dr. Schuller recalled, his decision to begin the church in Garden Grove in 1956 was driven by unwavering commitment to two principles. First, God was not calling Schuller to simply build another church, but rather to build a mission station which would reach people that don't go to church. Secondly, Schuller would spend his entire lifetime of ministry in this church.

Rev. Piazza's thoughts focused on the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, and he engaged the question, "How and where shall I invest my next 25 years of ministry?"

When Michael Piazza became Senior Pastor of MCC Dallas in 1987, the church had already broken the 400 barrier, and Rev. Piazza quickly initiated plans to move the congregation into another era of dynamic growth. This approach, discussed in Rev. Piazza's book, *Growth or Death?*, has led the church to its present membership of more than 1400. The church adopted a new name as Cathedral of Hope MCC, sold its former facilities, purchased land for a new location and broke ground for a new facility which was completed and occupied in 1993. The new building, which comfortably seats 700, is often crowded with nearly 1000 people in its most frequently attended worship service. Worship attendance for the past two months during 1995 has grown by 44% as compared with the same period of 1993.

The Cathedral of Hope may well become MCC's first megachurch. A "megachurch" is a church with an average attendance of more than 2000, according to John Vaughan in *Megachurches & America's Cities*. Around the world, Vaughan says, "The largest congregations in Christian history are being built today." In the United States alone, a new congregation breaks the 2000 average worship attendance barrier every two weeks.

Hiring the Legend–Architect Philip Johnson, second from right, joins Rev. Michael Piazza, Rev. Elder Don Eastman, and Rev. Elder Troy Perry in celebrating the inaugural of a new building project at Dallas.

Church leadership consultant Lyle Schaller identifies the key characteristics of these rapidly-growing megachurches in *The Seven-Day-A-Week Church*. These high-quality congregations which attract large numbers of new members are led by visionary senior ministers who believe and proclaim that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to transform the life of an individual. Hundreds, then thousands of transformed individuals enthusiastically share their experience with others who become a part of the congregation. This transformative experience is often found in powerful worship services filled with passion and feeling, and with a message which speaks to the human condition. It also can be found in the support of caring groups within the larger fellowship or in the multiple teaching and ministry opportunities available every day of the week. Most of these individuals eagerly accept the church's expectation of high commitment to stewardship, personal growth and participation in ministry.

Michael Piazza's thoughts were consumed with the future of the Cathedral of Hope, and with his future commitment as its Senior Pastor. The magnificent and inspiring Crystal Cathedral was designed by one of the greatest architects of our times, Mr. Philip Johnson. "Perhaps,"

AROUND THE FELLOWSHIP

Praises

MCC of Living Faith in St. Louis, Missouri member **Greg Jung** was elected as Vice President of the Missouri National Education Association **Spirit of Life MCC**, Holiday, Florida, "Monument to Vision" Building Fund Campaign, which raised more than $18,000 in June. ■ **MCC Detroit** and **Rosie Bonha** , a member of **Divine Peace MCC**, received the "Spirit of Detroit Award from the Detroit City Council at Detroit's Gay Pride Banquet. ■ **Victory Fellowship MCC**, Shreveport, Louisiana was recently approved as a Commissioned Church. ■ **Whosoever MCC Brighton and Hove**, East Sussex, UK, on your new building. ■ **Free Spirit MCC** at the California Institute for Women celebrated its ten year anniversary on August 12. **Rev. Elder Troy Perry** preached and **Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson** consecrated Communion. The women presented Rev. Perry with a beautiful portrait of him. ■ Praise for finding two medical personnel committed to going to Nigeria: **Rev. Elder Jean White** and **Carol Cooley MD**, of Baton Rogue Louisiana. ■ Praise for two very healthy and loving **Global Outreach** offerings at General Conference; one at the WCE Worship Service of nearly $4,000.00, which will help fund a trip to Nigeria later this year, and a surprised spirit-led offering at the business meeting of nearly $2,500.00 which will go directly to Global Outreach personnel. In addition close to $3,000.00 was raised at the GO EXPO table and went directly to our churches in Mexico and the Dominican Republic. **The Women s Secretariat** raised more than $500.00 for our sisters **Lupita** from Nicaragua and **Escarlet** from Mexico City!

Transitions

Rev. Elder John Gill, installed as Pastor of **King of Peace MCC**, St. Petersburg, Florida. ■ **Rev. Chuck Larsen**, retired recently after many years of faithful service. ■ **Rev. Kermie Wohlenhaus** accepted the call to **Pastor MCC Of The Living Spring**, Eureka Springs, Arkansas. ■ **Rev. Shelly Hamilton**, elected as Pastor of **First MCC of Kansas** in Wichita, Kansas. ■ **Rev. John Hankins**, called to pastor **All Saints MCC**, Atlanta, Georgia. ■ **Student Clergy Carl Matthews-Naylor** has been appointed Pastoral Leader of **MCC of the Rainbow**, Jackson, Mississippi.

AROUND THE FELLOWSHIP

Prayers

Rev. Tracy Dittmer has had some serious health challenges of late. ■ **Nancy Powersmith, MCC of the Gulfcoast**, is recuperating after a major motorcycle accident. ■ **Rev. Don Magill**, gravely ill at home in Tacoma, Washington ■ **Rev. T. Edward Helms** in time of transition ■ For the continuing recovery of **Rev. Jim Mitulski** from an infection of E-coli bacteria. ■ Special prayers requested for **Mr. Edgar Mendoza** as he begins his pastoral leadership at **MCC Manila**. ■ Prayers of love and support to our sisters and brothers in New Zealand who prepare to celebrate 20 years of UFMCC ministry in their country in October. ■ Special prayers for **ICM Buenos Aires**. ■ A request from the Ambassador to the United Nations from the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to inaugurate interfaith prayer services on August 11 through September 11 in response to the forces of destruction now plaguing their nation. No political position is taken but spiritual support is requested.

said Piazza, "I should ask Mr. Johnson if he would consider designing our next sanctuary." After all, Johnson had come out as a gay man in his autobiography a few years ago. Rev. Michael Piazza returned to Dallas and immediately wrote to Johnson. Mr. Johnson declined the proposed project. Undaunted, Rev. Piazza sought a personal meeting with Mr. Johnson, who graciously consented to the request. Again, Johnson apologized for not being able to accept the project, but invited Rev. Piazza to tell him more about the Cathedral of Hope. After twenty minutes of Michael's passionate and persuasive presentation of the Cathedral of Hope and his vision for its future, Philip Johnson responded, "I don't know how I could refuse to accept this project."

On July 2, more than 2,000 people gathered in morning worship to celebrate the Cathedral of Hope MCC's 25th anniversary. Witness was given to the many thousands of lives that have been touched and transformed by this church's ministry. But the most important focus was on the future. Rev. Piazza's message was filled with vision for a congregation that would be strong enough to provide life-changing, life-saving transformation, especially providing hope to gays and lesbians who continue to struggle in a world filled with hatred. At the conclusion of his sermon, Rev. Piazza announced the decision to begin plans for the next sanctuary and introduced Mr. Philip Johnson with his spouse of 35 years, Mr. David Whitney. The 25th anniversary service concluded with an announcement and ceremony by the Board of Directors. A new contract was signed with Rev. Michael Piazza to serve as the congregation's Senior Pastor for the next 25 years.

HIV/AIDS

PEP/MCC Underway

The Peer Education Program of the Metropolitan Community Churches (PEP/MCC), a new program of UFMCC AIDS Ministry, has received uniformly positive responses from around the Fellowship. Surveys were distributed at General Conference to gauge preliminary reactions to the new program for local churches. Many churches are already beginning their programs, with enthusiastic support from local health departments and educational institutions.

The PEP/MCC workshop at General Conference XVII was one of the best-attended and well-received workshops in the "HIV/AIDS track." Wendy Arnold, the founder and director of the original PEP program, Alison Arngrim, Bob Schoonover, and Rev. Steve Pieters were available throughout much of the conference for consultation and advice. Workshop participants were excited about the potential of the new program for HIV prevention among young people.

While Rev. Pieters is on administrative leave of absence from August 12 through November 12, questions and concerns regarding PEP/MCC should be addressed to Wendy Arnold at PEP/LA, 5410 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 203, Los Angeles, CA 90036 USA; phone 213\937-0766; fax 213/937-0779. If Wendy is not available, contact Bob Schoonover or Alison Arngrim at P.O. Box 46891, West Hollywood, CA 90046; phone 213/874-9364.

NEW HEADQUARTERS

Capital Campaign Hits the Road

Calls, letters, pledges and cash are continuing to pour in to UFMCC headquarters and MCC Los Angeles as Rev. Elder Troy Perry now begins an exciting whirlwind "tour of the fellowship," bringing the capital campaign to our local churches and communities.

Ivy Bottini and Rev. David Ferrell, Co-Chairs of the Campaign have indicated that the progress of this joint effort to date is very encouraging. Since the launching at General Conference in Atlanta, MCC Los Angeles has launched its local campaign, "Dare to Dream," with a kick-off event on August 27 in West Hollywood and has begun canvassing its members and friends.

Rev. Farrell and Bill Jones, campaign consultant, are now working with local MCC churches and the regional representatives recruited at General Conference, scheduling Rev.

CHRONICLES/JUNE 1995

Top 20 Tithes

1. Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas $6,372.77
2. Sunshine Cathedral MCC, Ft. Lauderdale $2,995.04
3. MCC of the Resurrection, Houston $2,885.20
4. MCC Washington, Washington $2,165.10
5. MCC Austin, Austin $1,623.89
6. St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville $1,517.28
7. Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston $1,313.15
8. MCC Richmond, Richmond $1,128.04
9. MCC Toronto, Toronto $1,024.14
10. MCC New York, New York $1,024.14
11. Gentle Shepherd MCC, Phoenix $980.51
12. Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton $968.70
13. Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota $967.54
14. MCC Tampa, Tampa $958.18
15. MCC San Francisco, San Francisco $932.83
16. Agape' MCC, Ft. Worth $928.48
17. MCC Key West, Key West $880.26
18. MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque $864.20
19. Harvest MCC, Denton $852.50
20. All God's Children MCC, Minneapolis $814.71

(These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.)

Top 20 Per Capita

1. Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston $44.51
2. Valleys of the Umpqua MCC, Roseburg $38.33
3. Oasis MCC, Phoenix $33.30
4. MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque $33.24
5. River of Life MCC, Richland $32.32
6. MCC Family in Christ, Ft. Collins $29.64
7. MCC New Haven, New Haven $26.56
8. Open Arms MCC, Rochester $26.04
9. Holy Covenant MCC, Hinsdale $25.89
10. MCC in Charlottesville, Charlottesville $25.61
11. Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota $24.81
12. New Life MCC, Charlotte $24.78
13. Harvest MCC, Denton $24.50
14. Christ the Liberator MCC, New Brunswick $24.31
15. Sisterspirit, Portland $2 4.00
16. MCC of Greater Hayward, San Lorenzo $23.22
17. MCC Augusta, Augusta $23.02
18. MCC of the Palm Beaches, West Palm Beach $ 22.46
19. MCC Johnson County, Shawnee $22.37
20. Divine Peace MCC, Madison Heights $21.25

(These figures reflect the average individual weekly offerings to the local church)

CHRONICLES/JULY 1995

Top 20 Tithes

1. MCC of the Resurrection, Houston $4,843.85
2. Sunshine Cathedral MCC, Ft. Lauderdale $3,188.95
3. MCC Washington, Washington $2,385.96
4. MCC New York, New York $2,024.74
5. St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville $1,557.13
6. MCC San Francisco, San Francisco $1,424.06
7. MCC Los Angeles, Los Angeles $1,351.66
8. Gentle Shepherd MCC, Phoenix $1,338.66
9. Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton $1,208.60
10. MCC Tampa, Tampa $1,184.26
11. MCC Richmond, Richmond $1,163.34
12. MCC Toronto, Toronto $1,070.76
13. All God's Children MCC, Minneapolis $1,060.66
14. First MCC of Atlanta, Atlanta $1,057.56
15. Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota $1,039.94
16. Agape' MCC, Ft. Worth $986.26
17. MCC Charleston, Charleston $979.80
18. MCC Key West, Key West $861.63
19. MCC of Greater St. Louis, St. Louis $804.99
20. Harvest MCC, Denton $785.66

(These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.)

Top 20 Per Capita

1. MCC of the Disciples, Washington $46.37
2. Oasis MCC, Phoenix $44.19
3. MCC in Charlottesville, Charlottesville $40.38
4. MCC New York, New York $31.01
5. Open Arms MCC, Rochester $30.10
6. MCC of Greater Hayward, San Lorenzo $28.66
7. Faith Eternal MCC, Springfield $26.74
8. Lexington's MCC, Lexington $25.75
9. New Life MCC, Charlotte $25.17
10. Spirit Eagle MCC, Spring Valley $24.31
11. MCC of Living Faith, St. Louis $23.51
12. Trinity MCC, Arlington $23.50
13. MCC New Haven, New Haven $23.33
14. Harvest MCC, Denton $21.76
15. St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville $21.48
16. Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota $21.40
17. Reconciliation MCC, Grand Rapid $20.26
18. MCC Knoxville, Knoxville $19.97
19. MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque $19.96
20. Victory Fellowship MCC, Shreveport $19.94

(These figures reflect the average individual weekly offerings to the local church)

Audio Tapes: General Conference

$7 each, Album of 4 $22, Album of 16 $80
Choose any 4 or 16 and get them in a UFMCC Casette Album

WORSHIP SERVICES

- ☐ Opening Worship Service CO9530
  Sunday, July 23
  Rev. Elder Hong Tan
- ☐ Evening Worship Service CO9531
  (Taizé-style) Monday July 24,
  Service of Reflection and Remembrance.
- ☐ Morning Worship Service CO9532
  Tuesday July 25
  Ms. Hilary Clinton
- ☐ Evening Worship Service CO9533
  Tuesday July 25
  Rev. Elder Donald Eastman
- ☐ Morning Worship Service CO9534
  Wednesday July 26
  Elder Larry Rodriguez
- ☐ Evening Worship Service CO9535
  World Church Extension
  Wed. July 26,
  Rev. Elder Darlene Garner
- ☐ Morning Worship Service CO9536
  Thursday July 27
  Mr. Jeffrey Jordan
- ☐ Evening Worship Service CO9537
  Thursday July 27
  Rev. Elder Wilhelmina Hein
- ☐ Morning Worship Service CO9538
  Friday July 28

- ☐ Evening Worship
  Ordination Service CO9539
  Friday July 28
  Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson
- ☐ Human Rights Worship
  Service CO9540
  Saturday July 29
  Rev. Pat Bumgardner
- ☐ Closing Worship Service CO9541
  Sunday July 30
  Rev. Elder Troy Perry

LUNCHEONS

- ☐ AIDS Ministry Luncheon CO9527
  Thursday July 27
  Dr. James Curran
- ☐ Ecumenical Witness and
  Ministry Luncheon CO9528
  Friday July 28
  Rev. Paul Sherry

WORKSHOPS

- ☐ Workshop CO9546
  Chris Glaser
  Coming Out to God Part 1 of 4
- ☐ Workshop CO9547
  Chris Glaser
  Coming Out to God Part 2 of 4
- ☐ Workshop CO9548
  Chris Glaser
  Coming Out to God Part 3 of 4
- ☐ Workshop CO9549
  Chris Glaser
  Coming Out to God Part 4 of 4
- ☐ Workshop CO9550
  Rev. Alan Eddington
  HIV Negative Ministry
- ☐ Workshop CO9554
  Donna Knutson, Kevin Brady
  Women's Health
- ☐ Workshop CO9555
  Rev. Arlene Ackerman
  Breaking the Single Cell Barrier
- ☐ Workshop CO9556
  Rev. Michael Piazza
  Breaking the 200 Barrier
- ☐ Workshop CO9559
  Rev. Frankye White
  The Organic Church
- ☐ Workshop CO9562
  Rev. Dr. Mel White
  Discover SOUL FORCE

PLENARY SESSIONS

- ☐ Plenary Session CO9542
  Tues. July 25
  Chandler Burr
  Homosexuality and Genetic Surgery
- ☐ Plenary Session CO9543
  Wed. July 26
  Dr. Elizabeth Stuart
  Daring to Speak Loves Name
- ☐ Plenary Session CO9544
  Thursday July 27
  Eric Rofes
  Reviving theTribe: Regenerating
- ☐ Plenary Session CO9545
  Saturday July 29
  Dr. Randall Bailey
  Church, Scripture and the Right

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Perry's fundraising tour of the fellowship. In each of the communities on the tour, Rev. Perry will make personal solications with individuals and organizations as well as make a presentation to the local church.

Between now and November, Rev. Perry's itinerary includes visits to MCC churchs in Nevada, Oklahoma, Texas, Florida, Kansas, Illinois, California, Maryland, and Washington D.C. Please pray for Rev. Perry on this historic journey as the campaign moves toward the goal of providing a new home for our fellowship and the "mother" church, a beacon of hope for "the next generation."

HOPE

Skills Building Conference

"Hope" is the theme of the 1995 U.S. National Skills Building Conference. The conference is the only national, award-winning management training conference exclusively designed to enhance the effectiveness of front-line workers in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The conference this year will be held October 19-22, 1995, at the Century Plaza Hotel and Tower in Los Angeles, California. The conference is co-sponsored once again by the AIDS National Interfaith Network, the National Minority AIDS Council, and the National Association of People with AIDS, all U.S.-based organizations. The conference last year, in Atlanta, attracted more than 14,000 AIDS workers and people living with HIV/AIDS from all over the world.

This year's conference theme, Hope, strikes a universal chord in all people working in the AIDS movement. While many disagree about many things at any given time, all agree with certainty that within each lives hope. It cannot be disputed that all hope for a cure, pray for the strength to carry on, and hope to never forget all those who have gone before.

Members of the Metropolitan Community Churches have been, and will continue to be, key players in planning, teaching, and attending the National Skills Building Conference. Instead of an UFMCC AIDS Ministry

Conference, members of Metropolitan Community Churches are encouraged to attend the National Skills Building Conference which provides great opportunities for learning, growing, and networking.

For more information about registration, contact the National Skills Building Conference office at 1931 13th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009-4432, telephone 202/483-1124, Fax 202/483-1127.

GLOBAL OUTREACH

Global Forerunners

Rev. Judy Dahl

As Atlanta, Georgia prepared to host the International Summer Olympics, the Global Community of the UFMCC came as forerunners, with torch bearers from around the globe.

All current UFMCC churches were represented except Nigeria. Once again Rev. Maduka was unable to secure a visa for travel to the United States. As Rev. Perry indicated in his address to the conference, we will change that once and for all by sending a delegation to Nigeria whose extensive agenda will include helping the Maduka's secure visas to our next General Conference.

In worship, in business, at special luncheons and throughout the diverse settings of our week-long conference, the visibility, and recognition of our growing global community was present. Sole torch bearers from distant countries met us in the arena of God s faithfulness and blessed us with more light, more truth, more life. Edgar Mendoza from the Philippines filled the stadium with "walla imposible" which is Filipino for "all things are possible." Lupita Sequiera from Nicaragua spoke in a quiet, yet passionate voice at the Woman s Secretariat luncheon about the great need for connection and courage. Rev. Gonzalez linked his life to the UFMCC in his lifetime ordination. Escarlet Gasca from Mexico City shared of her partner's struggle with cancer. She showed us the strength of God's power in her faith to go on. Rev. Alfonso Leija from Cuernavaca Mexico built bridges of communication and peace. New Zealand brought six of it s finest and graced us with so much warmth and love. Rev. Barrera brought quilts to warm and remind us. Our richness and vastness and breadth were tangible realities of God s faithfulness and love for us.

Rev. Maduka's daughter at keyboard during service in Nigeria. Once again, Rev. Maduka was unable to secure a visa.

And we also had visitors who came as spectators to watch these international games. Two different congregations from South Africa were in Atlanta with us. One group from Johannesburg came with a letter requesting affiliation. We are in process with them now. The other group, yet uncertain, came and participated at each level of our common life together. We can be proud of who we have become together, that we have made a miracle of the blessings God has given to us.

Every country and culture and person of God among us got the gold. The closing ceremony left us each eager for the next games in two years. We'll be back, better trained, older but wiser, well-conditioned, unable to keep the torch under the bushel We shall come again, each country, each team, each gift acknowledged with the light of Christ held high.

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BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS

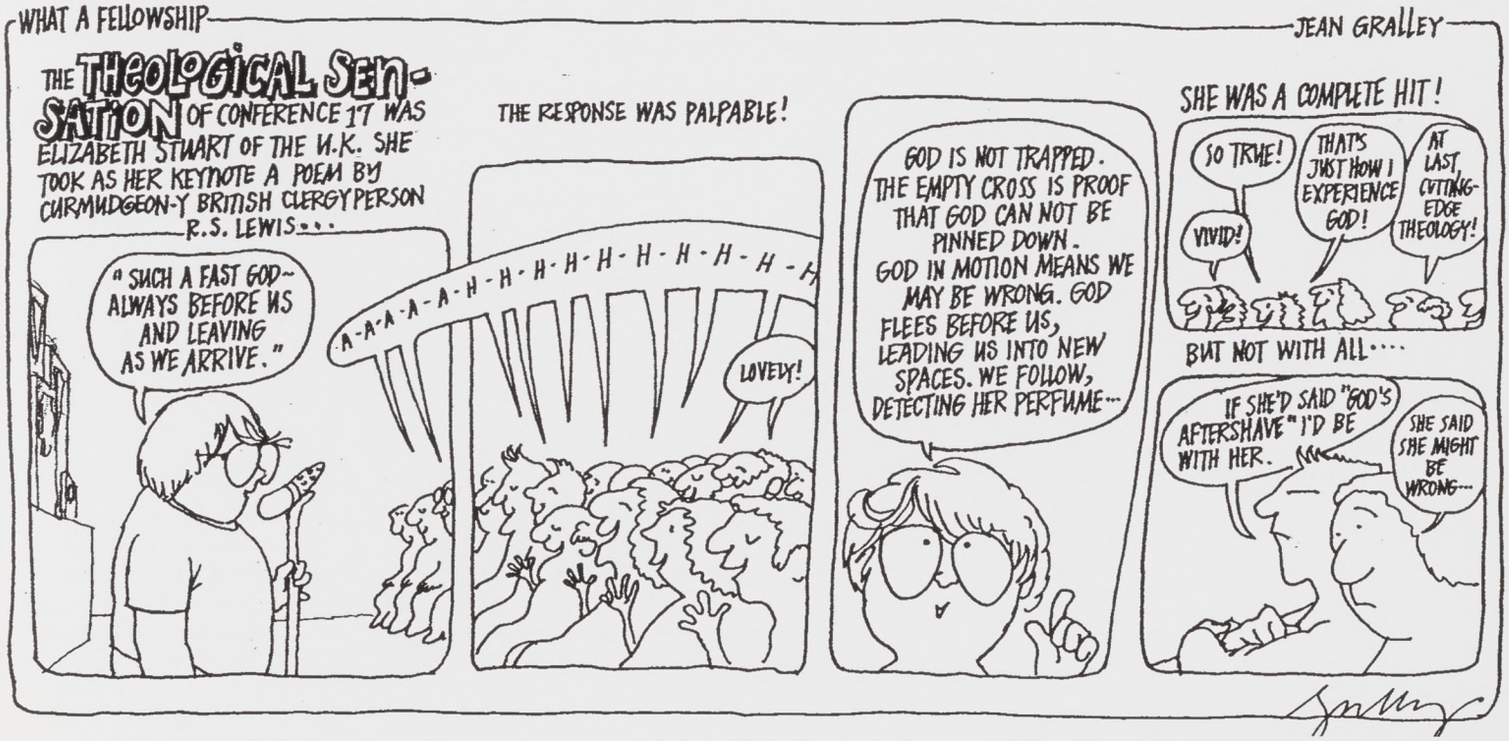
FREE! UFMCC Resource Catalog - The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is offering the new RESOURCE CENTER CATALOG, Please write or call: UFMCC Catalog, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; or call (213) 464-5100.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

New Hope! MCC Santa Rosa searching for Pastor. Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, lies among vineyards and redwood trees. Church of 50 members celebrating 10 years of service. We are offering 50% time position with intent to work together towards full time ministry. We invite you to write for an application: The pastoral Search Committee, New Hope! MCC, P.O. Box 11278, Santa Rosa, CA 95406. Deadline to apply: October 31, 1995.

MCC LIVING FAITH SEEKS FULL-TIME PASTOR for 1996. Our 25 member, 6 year old congregation (commissioned church) in St. Louis, MO, is ready for our next level of growth. An information packet can be obtained by writing Search Committee, 2512 Bopp Rd. St. Louis, MO 63131.

Position available for part time pastor of young congregation in large metropolitan area with many educational, cultural and employment opportunities. We are looking for someone ready to grow with us. For more information contact: Pastor Search Committee, Gentle Souls MCC, P.O. Box 22643, Kansas City MO 64113, (816)636-6093



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